

A Memory of Love

A short story by r.e.joyce

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A note - on this manuscript from VmPublishing

We were approached by a rather dusty old gentleman who stated flatly in a west Texas drawl, that he “found the scrolls while looking for gold”. His only requirement was to be left alone and that any money could be left at the Western Union station for his eventual return to civilization.

They were parchments dating far back in history and they related tales that filled our staff with excitement. Our happiness was so great that we chose a pen name commensurate – This is the 5th transcription of the works we have been given under the name of r.e.joyce. We hope you rejoice too!



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He knelt by the pond absently turning the flat stone in his hand looking beyond the ripples towards nothing, and he remembered long ago.

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He was tall and strong and young and alive seeking adventure. The run through the forest had created a thirst and he knelt by the pond to gather up the crystal water when there appeared a vision within the ripples. Transfixed he stared at the water praying the little waves would still just long enough for him to catch a glimpse of the beauty staring up at him from the pond.

Then he felt her hand and heard her playful laughter as she turned and ran across the glade filled with bluebonnets and dandelions. He stood and turned to watch her go but he knew that life would never be the same. Somehow she had already taken his heart. He had seen the essence he sought and still could not comprehend what it was.

The adventure now begun, the youth found horse and searched the countryside for the damsel of his heart's desire. It was not to be this day but inside he knew that life and circumstance could not deny what had stirred so deep within his soul.

His was a life of duty and his return to the fortress meant a return to the training required of those who command the forces of the kingdom. Days passed and stars repeatedly pierced his painful nightmares as he tried to catch a glimpse of the lady in the ripples. The hole where his young heart belonged could not be filled by dreams or hard exercise.

The land was besieged and he heeded the call to duty. He trudged on, turning youthful energy into the scars of war. Beaten down by loss of friend and horrors seen, the dream from the pond held his last bit of hope. Finally after fulfilling his duty, he let his father's dreams of office slip and chose a solitary life seeking something lost. To find himself he needed to find the vision from the pond once more.

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She filled the encampment with joy and her laughter brought smiles to even her stoic father. They lived life within the moment not placing roots or towns or villages but following the seasons as the great herds did each turn of the heavens. The activity upon

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her return took away her smile. The elders were rapidly binding tent to horse and children rushed through the chores of breaking camp. The happiness found within the glade was to be a distant memory as she gathered up her belongings, bowing to the will of her father.

They traveled north and east away from war and away from the lands civilized by knights and kingdoms. Theirs was a life of wandering and the far reaches of the north were still too distant for the armored warriors to bother with. Summers had come and gone and the ceremony of youth blended with the duties to the tribe. She knew her father would call for her hand soon.

* * *

Staring into the darkness south of the encampment she caught the shadow of a horse and rider far away on the plains. The waves of grass blew gently towards her carrying a prayer she too prayed to so many stars. The girl stood tall and watched as rider and horse filled in her heart with joy. She knew and smiled seeing the rider beg the horse for more speed.

He stood now before a dream held so long it seemed to be fairytale. His war worn features a mockery to what this beauty deserved. But he held out his hand to give her bluebonnets and dandelions. The joyful laughter washed away the years and the miles of his life were fulfilled as she ran into his embrace.

Hands now clutched tightly, they stood before her father for the mystery of bonding that would bless their lives. The tribal leader saw something he remembered from years ago when he too fell into the heart of another.

The cloth wrapped over hands with beads a mother had sewn for dowry and the gentle touch of an old man's lips to foreheads, bade these two to their special union. And so the mystery of love touched the reality of life once more, and soared as high as the heavens and dove as deep as the soul. The ripples faded and they were one.

* * *

Of days and deeds, merry abandon washed away the frivolous details until one morning in spring there appeared the labor of their love. Loud and wonderful the little one sang to the world and their love took on a joy beyond all imagining. Life now blessed, they poured their joy into the growing toddler, understanding the fullness of life.

In the child's fifth winter, his love sighed and fell into the eternal sleep cradled in his arms as she held their gift of love in hers, his silent tears soaking both child and mother.

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As he stood, he felt her hand gather around his waist and felt her sigh as she found her place within his embrace. Looking down at the pond she spoke softly, "I miss her so daddy".

He gathered her into his arms, strong and able, and gently kissed the top of her head. Looking down he could see her face in the ripples and beheld the beauty of so long ago.

Looking into her eyes he smiled and kissed her forehead. "Come, child mine, we have a knight in shining armor to find."

He turned from the pond and with strides of youth carried his daughter into her destiny. "We both feel the loss of her presence but her love will remain with us, and as long as we believe in the gift of love, she will remain throughout eternity."

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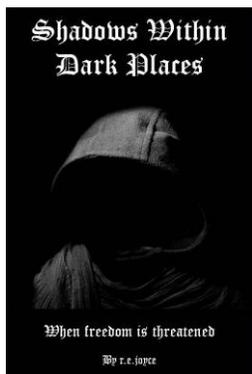
Books by r.e.joyce



Ariah, from the moment of her transformation to Unicorn, is given a mission to find and stop the evil that has covered her valley in darkness. Leaving the only home she knows, she bands with an elf maiden Dariel, a leopard, a grumpy wolf and even the young man Tarran for a journey of discovery seeking the Light of Savron that can stand up against the darkness. As they seek, her horn changes color until in battle it turns crystal revealing her to be the Light of Savron. Yet it is in the love of Dariel and Tarran that the true light is made complete. While the world holds back the evil hordes, Ariah brings her precious friends before the darkness and returns the world to the light of love.

Seven Stars of Midnight is an epic fantasy thriller centered on a world at the brink of darkness. The forces of evil, festering for centuries, erupt and seven heroes are called to save the world and rebuild the goodness of the earth.

Gathered together from all parts of the known world, our heroes lay their individual desires aside to become part of the adventure and by doing so build something new and worthy of praise.



This epic fantasy finds an ancient world being plunged into chaos by an evil warlord and a creature from the swamps. Heroes are called to take up the battle but it is a strange shadowy figure who guides them.

Jadarr is not seen and his character is continually questioned, but they choose to follow as he gathers together those who will serve the kingdom. Is he evil or is he good? Fairytale or sent by God? Intertwined into the fabric of this world is a figure standing apart yet bringing those who seek goodness together.

Are we guided by unseen forces and are these forces reflected in the lives of unique individuals who pass through our lives and give us hope? Look around and you will see that the mystery and majesty of ancient times is still with us today.